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NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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Kick off National Preparedness Month by updating family plans, supply kits

Danielle is a powerful hurricane that fortunately stayed 1,000 miles off the mid-Atlantic coast, August 29 is the 5th anniversary of Katrina-related devastation of New Orleans and Hurricane Earl is gathering strength and moving westward across the Atlantic.

Appropriately, Sept.1 marks the beginning of National Preparedness Month.

Even though Delaware is enjoying a sunny, calm close of summer, emergency management officials encourage everyone to realize that the state is not immune to natural hazards and other devastating events. Everyone should take advantage of this quiet time to update their household emergency plan and restock their emergency supply kit. Danielle might have dodged the state and tropical storms don't usually strike the mid-Atlantic shores with the intensity of a Katrina, but Delawareans can't safely assume that they will always be spared catastrophic storms or other emergencies.

With memories of back-to-back blizzards in February 2010 and knowledge of September and October being frequent storm months, Delaware Emergency Management Agency joins the national initiative in encouraging and teaching preparedness. The agency, including Delaware Citizen Corps, offers materials, presentations and instruction in household and community preparedness. Events scheduled to observe National Preparedness Month include Family Emergency Preparedness Day, Saturday, Sept. 11, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. in Glasgow Park in New Castle County.

Free family emergency preparedness presentations are available statewide. DEMA-trained presenters can be scheduled for a presentation that features step by step guidance in creating a family plan, an example of an emergency supply kit and preparedness materials. The presentations are appropriate for civic and educational organizations, church groups and neighborhood associations as well as for businesses. For information or to schedule a presentation, call 856-5815 in Sussex County, and 659-2210 for Kent or New Castle counties.

Citizen Corps also offers Community Emergency Response Team training and emergency preparedness classes. For information, call 659-2243.

There are basic components to family preparedness. All households should have enough emergency supplies on hand to last for three to five days. Supplies need to include non-perishable foods, at least one gallon of water per day for each person and appropriate water for pets. Including checking kit supplies, in case of pending storms or other emergencies, residents should monitor messages from local emergency officials. Household emergency plans should include tips on how to decide whether to evacuate or stay in place, choosing an evacuation destination prior to an emergency and rehearsing packing out and following an emergency evacuation route.

Important items to have ready in case of an emergency include a battery- or crank-powered radio (like a NOAA Weather Radio), flashlights, extra batteries, medicines, a hand-operated can opener, utility knife and first aid supplies. Important documents should be copied and stored in a waterproof bag. These may include medical records, contracts, property deeds, leases, banking records, insurance records and birth certificates.

When creating or reviewing your family emergency plan, make sure you also consider the potential needs of everyone. If you or anyone in your household has a disability, special steps for planning and carrying out your plan should be considered now.

Pets also require special handling. They may become agitated during the onset of a storm, so an appropriate number of pet carriers should be on hand for safe travel. If evacuation destinations to stay with friends or family are not available, pet owners should pre-identify pet friendly hotels or pet boarding facilities within a certain radius of where you may evacuate. Pet shelters are available for those who must evacuate to identified public shelters, however, people and pets will be more comfortable in evacuation destinations of their own choosing.

FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate stated, "We never know where the next hurricane or disaster will strike, but we know that the more we do to prepare now, the better the outcome will be. FEMA will continue to work with our private sector, local, state, tribal and federal partners to ensure that we are prepared, but it is also important that all Americans take the necessary steps now- like developing a family disaster plan - before a hurricane or disaster strikes."

Emergency preparedness information is also available at www.dema.delaware.gov, www.delawarecitizencorps.org, www.prepared.org, and www.ready.gov.

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